



**CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM**

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, California 95814

(916) 657-2666
FAX **(916) 654-9780**

May 12, 1998

Alex Hildebrand
23443 S. Hays Road
Manteca, CA 95337

Dear Alex:

Thank you for your letter dated March 2, 1998. On your letter you requested information regarding CALFED staff work on an "improved" through Delta facility.

Expanded Evaluation of Alternative 2

In response to your comments, Program staff have begun an evaluation of a variant of Alternative 2 that includes conveyance improvements to the South Fork Mokelumne River. This alternative would be similar to the Alternative 2B evaluated in the Draft PEIS/R, with Common Programs, storage facilities, a screened diversion at Hood with capacity of 10,000 cfs, and south Delta conveyance improvements. The conveyance improvements contemplated for the North Fork Mokelumne River under Alternative 2B would be replaced by equivalent channel improvements on the South Fork Mokelumne River under this new variation. Consideration will also be given to a barrier at Georgiana Slough in this evaluation.

It is expected that under this variation, incremental improvements in export water quality in comparison to Alternative 2B would be realized by moving the primary export conveyance route through the Delta farther inland. Delta simulation modeling studies have been initiated to provide information on flow patterns and water quality for both in-Delta and export purposes under this Delta configuration. Some of the key issues associated with this alignment which staff will be reviewing include costs, potential riparian and shallow water habitat impacts, recreational impacts, flood impacts, and fisheries impacts.

Program staff expects that Delta simulation modeling will be completed by June 15, 1998. Using this information, Program staff will evaluate water quality, ecosystem restoration, and flood control impacts of this alternative variation relative to other Program alternatives. A draft report documenting this evaluation should be completed by June 30, 1998.

CALFED Agencies

California
The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Water Resources
California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board

Federal
Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

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With regard to your other request in your letter, CALFED is now in the process of undertaking a risk assessment comparing the alternatives. A qualitative cost benefit assessment will be undertaken once the expert panel on fisheries completes its work in the next few months.

With regard to your comments on CALFED assessment of the significance of bromides in source water, CALFED staff will be convening an expert panel this summer to address the issue of bromides and source water quality. The US EPA is concerned about the problem of bromides and is undertaking a national research effort which will be under way for at least the next two years. Since their findings will not conclude in a time frame, compatible with the CALFED schedule, the CALFED expert panel will make its recommendations based on the current level of understanding of the seriousness of the problem and the associated costs of treatment versus source water quality improvement.

As you know, Governor Wilson announced on Wednesday that the comment period on the draft EIR/EIS will be extended, and discussion on a draft preferred alternative will be reached by the CALFED agencies by the end of the summer. This extension of the schedule will allow the CALFED agencies' to incorporate the recommendations of the fisheries and bromide expert panels and will provide additional time for further public review and comments on the EIR. The focus of the next several BDAC meetings will be on the important policy issues which you have raised regarding the extent to which the common programs and each of the draft alternatives meet the solution principles of the program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lester A. Snow', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lester A. Snow
Executive Director